The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Management Plan 2009 – 2014
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The first statutory Management Plan for the North Pennines AONB was produced by the AONB Partnership on behalf of its constituent local authorities in 2004. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000) states that, in relation to Local Authorities, AONB Management Plans are intended to “…formulate their policy for the management of their Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it”.

**AONB Management Plans are intended to:**

- highlight the special qualities and enduring significance of the AONB and the importance of its landscape features, and identify those that are vulnerable to change
- present an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities, regardless of administrative boundaries
- set out agreed objectives which will help secure that vision
- identify what needs to be done, by whom and when, in order to achieve these objectives
- stimulate action aimed at helping people to discover, enjoy and understand the local landscape and its natural and cultural features
- identify actions which will support those economic and social activities which in themselves contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

The Plan is not intended to be a panacea for all the problems which local communities might face, nor is it intended to duplicate or replace other statutory plans which affect the area. It is, however, the only document with a focus on the whole of the AONB and the only one which is primarily focused on the purpose of the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

This document forms the second part of a three-part Management Plan incorporating:

- What’s special about the North Pennines? – a document which highlights the area’s special qualities
- this document (Strategy), which shows the strategic context of the Plan, its vision, the issues it sets out to address and the objectives identified over the life of the document to 2014
- an Action Plan, showing what will be done to meet the objectives.
Who is the Plan for?

One audience for this plan is the local authorities of the North Pennines (see page 6), as it is upon them that the duty is placed to produce the plan and to conserve and enhance the AONB.

Another important audience is the Government agencies, statutory undertakers, utilities and public bodies, which must, in accordance with Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000, have “due regard” to the purposes of AONB designation in the carrying out of their functions. The objectives and actions in this plan should guide them in the fulfillment of their duty under the Act.

A third and equally important audience is the wide range of local organisations and individuals with a concern for the future wellbeing of the North Pennines, be they land owners, land managers, local businesses, local residents, visitors or funding bodies. It is hoped that this plan will provide them with the inspiration and guidance to bring forward innovative ideas for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and lead to greater awareness and understanding of the designation. Crucially, it is not the plan for the AONB Partnership or the work programme for its Staff Unit – it is the plan for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and all those with an interest in the area can be involved in its implementation.

How the Plan was produced

This management plan has been produced by the North Pennines AONB Partnership Staff Unit on behalf of the five local authorities of the North Pennines. The Staff Unit was supported in this work by a Technical Advisory Panel drawn from Partnership member organisations, and by the Partnership’s five Working Groups which cover a range of themes relevant to AONB management. It was also informed by a comprehensive scoping report and initial issues consultation which engaged all tiers of local government, statutory agencies, NGOs and community groups. A draft plan was consulted on at public drop-in sessions and on the Partnership’s website and over 850 comments were recorded and addressed individually. A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment further informed the final version.
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The UK’s AONBs and National Parks are within a worldwide category of protected areas known as ‘Protected Landscapes’, which has been devised by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Areas of special countryside throughout the world have been given protection of various kinds so that their qualities can be enjoyed by present and future generations. Parallel landscapes in other countries include the French Parc Naturels and the National Parks of countries such as Spain and Portugal.

AONBs are unique and irreplaceable national assets and along with National Parks represent our finest countryside. There are 36 AONBs in England, covering 15% of the land area, and a further 4 in Wales. They range in size from the Isles of Scilly (16 km²) to the Cotswolds (2038 km²).

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In pursuing the primary purpose account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment. Promoting opportunities for recreation is not an objective of designation, but the demand for recreation should be met so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

The North Pennines AONB

The designation of the North Pennines AONB was confirmed in 1988 and at 1983 km², it is the second largest of the 40 AONBs. One of the most remote and unspoilt places in England, it lies between the National Parks of the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales and Northumberland with the urban centres of County Durham away to the east. The AONB crosses the boundaries of two English Regions, being in both the North East and the North West. It lies mostly within the boundaries of five local authorities: the three counties of Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland and the districts of Carlisle and Eden with 2.6 km² in North Yorkshire around Tan Hill.
Natural beauty

Today’s North Pennines landscape is the result of thousands of years of human activity. It has been shaped by early settlers who cleared the forests, by the first (and generations of subsequent) farmers, the long history of mining for lead and other minerals, by moorland managers and by more modern developments. It is not ‘natural’ in the sense of being untouched and pristine, but it does have a distinctive character and is a deeply rural environment with few large human-made features, and a sense of wildness, remoteness and tranquillity which has no equal in England. ‘Natural beauty’ in the context of AONBs is about much more than scenic quality, and includes landform, geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries.
The legal framework

AONBs have their roots in the same legislation that brought about the National Parks – the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 (S.89) consolidated and strengthened earlier legislation on AONBs and for the first time placed a statutory duty on Local Authorities to act jointly to produce Management Plans for AONBs within their boundaries. These plans should ‘formulate the policies of Local Authorities in relation to their AONBs’ and the objectives and actions in this plan should be used to that end.

Local Authorities must also have ‘due regard’ for the purpose of AONB designation in the carrying out of their functions (S.85). This latter duty is also extended to public bodies and statutory undertakers. Local Authorities remain responsible for planning and development control in AONBs. Regional Spatial Strategies (North East and North West), along with Local Development Frameworks for the Local Authorities, provide the planning policies for the AONB. These policies must be informed by the content of this management plan in accordance with S.89 of the CRoW Act.

National policy relating to development in AONBs is set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas), which states that:

Nationally designated areas comprising National Parks, the Broads, the New Forest Heritage Area and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas.

Major developments should not take place in these designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances. This policy includes major development proposals that raise issues of national significance. Major development proposals should be demonstrated to be in the public interest before being allowed to proceed. Consideration of such applications should therefore include an assessment of:

(i) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

(ii) the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

(iii) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.
Each AONB has an organisation responsible for co-ordinating efforts to conserve and enhance it. Locally this is the North Pennines AONB Partnership. It is made up of 23 statutory agencies, local authorities and voluntary/community organisations which care for the North Pennines. The work of the AONB Partnership is carried out through the AONB Staff Unit, employed through its accountable body, Durham County Council. The purpose of the Staff Unit is to promote partnership working to conserve and enhance the AONB and to produce, monitor and take action to implement the AONB Management Plan. It also acts as a champion for the area in matters relating to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. The core functions of AONB Staff Units are defined by Natural England. The AONB Staff Unit is based in Stanhope, in County Durham.
‘Ecosystem services’ from our landscape

The landscape of the North Pennines is beautiful and rich in wildlife, but it also provides us with more than attractive views and the chance to see special plants and animals, important though these things are.

Our landscape provides us with food, jobs, timber and building materials from farming, forestry, grouse moor management and small-scale quarrying for local stone. Farming, forestry and grouse moor management in particular play a vital role in shaping the landscape, and these activities and the future of this special place are interlinked.

Careful management of our peatlands ensures that they remain a vast store of carbon, mitigating against the impacts of climate change; keeping our peatlands wet also brings benefits in reducing downstream flooding, conserving wildlife, conserving the record of past lives and environments locked in the peat, and also brings benefits through reducing water colour (and cutting the cost of ‘cleaning’ it).

Other ecosystem services we get from our landscape include the dispersal and cycling of nutrients, pollination and, with the right technology in the right place, a source of renewable energy. It is also a source of clean air and water, tranquillity and freedom from noise and light pollution. Crucially we can also see in our landscape the places our communities have come from, the memory of how we got to where we are now and the assets that can point towards our future.

This stunning landscape, with its abundant plants and wildlife, provides all of us, local people and visitors, with a place where we can improve our health and our well-being by getting out and exploring the relatively unspoilt nature of the North Pennines. This in turn provides opportunities to develop tourism based around those people who want to come and explore this area precisely because it is beautiful.

The economy of the North Pennines is characterised by a multitude of very small businesses. Studies tell us that the majority of small businesses in the area feel that the high quality environment has a direct impact on the business and that a deterioration of the landscape would have a negative effect on their work.

A beautiful landscape, rich in wildlife, history and community, provides our society with a great many services; only by supporting the things that keep it special can these vital services be provided into the future.
Ecosystem services

Regulating Services
- Carbon storage
- Pollination
- Nutrient dispersal and cycling
- Flood risk management

Provisioning Services
- Wood, wood products and fuel
- Stone and building materials
- Small-scale renewable energy
- Food

Supporting Services
- Air quality
- Water quality
- Drinking water

Cultural Services
- Tranquility
- Scientific discovery/research
- Jobs
- Recreation and sustainable tourism
- Health and wellbeing
- Attractor for business location

A high quality landscape rich in wildlife, geological features and cultural heritage.
A separate booklet which forms part of this Management Plan outlines what makes the North Pennines AONB such a priceless national asset. There are many different pressures on our wildlife, our wild places, our historic environment and our communities and there is much that we need to conserve and enhance:

- A nationally important landscape of dales and moorlands, criss-crossed by dry stone walls, cut through by tumbling rivers, with villages of local stone reflecting the underlying geology
- A world class geological heritage celebrated in part through our UNESCO European and Global Geopark status
- 40% of the UK’s species-rich upland hay meadows and 21% of England’s blanket bog
- With over 22,000 pairs of breeding wading birds this is England’s wader hotspot, as well as supporting over 80% of England’s black grouse
- The Teesdale Assemblage flora is nationally special
- Moor House–Upper Teesdale National Nature Reserve, Britain’s largest terrestrial NNR, supports more than 20 species of Europe-wide conservation importance
- 50% of the AONB is designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and there are seven Special Areas of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive and a Special Protection Area under the EU Birds Directive
- Our lead mining heritage and mineral wealth is known throughout the world
- Beneath the surface of today’s pattern of fields, villages and moorland there is a history of settlement and landscape change from medieval to prehistoric times. Norse, Roman, Iron Age, Bronze Age and possibly Neolithic settlers began shaping this land, perhaps as far back as 7,000 years ago
- Our landscape provides ecosystem services such as carbon storage, employment and flood risk management, and contributes to our health and wellbeing.
- A wildness, remoteness and tranquillity unrivalled in England.

What’s special about the North Pennines?
Some common principles

There are some basic operating principles that underpin all the different strands of this Management Plan. It is anticipated that these principles, in tandem with the objectives and actions, will guide policy formulation and action in relation to the AONB across a wide range of organisations, notably local authorities and public bodies with duties in relation to the AONB under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

The following principles run through all the strands of this Management Plan:

There is much that we don’t know – increasing our collective knowledge about all aspects of conservation and sustainable development will lead to better decision making.

Climate change – that human-influenced climate change is real. Projects and initiatives should have as small a carbon footprint as possible. All of the AONB Partnership’s own major activities will include an assessment of their climate change impact and a measure to mitigate against it. Small scale renewable energy schemes will be encouraged (where they do not compromise the area’s special qualities), and local people’s effort to reduce the amount of energy and resources they use will be supported. Projects which seek land management solutions to problems of a changing climate will be encouraged, as will research which helps us better understand climate change.

Landscape change – that change in the landscape is inevitable, and that change needs to be managed carefully to ensure that it is beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the area’s high quality environment.

Economy and environment – that somewhere rich in natural beauty and with a strong sense of place is a tremendous economic and social asset, that provides many services for society. An economy is developing which is predicated upon keeping this place special and in a nationally protected landscape in particular, development must be environmentally sustainable not just economically and socially sustainable.

Nature and heritage conservation – that opportunities to conserve landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and the historic environment should be sought in all projects and developments. There is a need to integrate the conservation and enhancement of these environmental assets and not see them in isolation from each other. There is an assumption in this Plan that we will not bring about one environmental benefit at the expense of another, e.g. new woodlands will not be planted on areas with existing biodiversity importance or historic significance, or wind turbines would not be erected where they would damage the character of the landscape.

Supporting sustainable land management – that almost all of the AONB is in private ownership and that landowners and land managers have played a significant role in creating today’s North Pennines and are continuing to maintain the area’s special qualities. Supporting the retention of viable and sustainable upland livestock farming and promoting sustainable moorland management are vital factors in keeping the area special, and it will be important to make the most of agri-environment schemes.

Working together – that strong and meaningful partnerships between landowners, businesses, conservation bodies, local authorities, public bodies and local people are the only way to ensure that natural beauty has a bright future. Generating consensus takes time and effort but is always worth it, not least because partnership approaches add immense value to often very limited budgets.

Available to all – that there should be equality of opportunity for everyone to enjoy what this area has to offer – there is more to understand and more barriers to remove to make this possible, from limited public transport, to the need for better information or better infrastructure; the most accessible option, in relation to physical and intellectual access to the AONB, is the one that should be chosen where this does not compromise natural beauty.

Community and conservation – that local people are at the heart of the AONB and that they should be encouraged and supported to devise projects and initiatives that conserve natural beauty, or become involved in those led by others. In order to thrive and remain viable communities need affordable housing, and access to employment, services and facilities, and these things can be compatible with the purpose of AONB designation.

Education and interpretation – that in all of the conservation work in the AONB, opportunities should be grasped for interpretation of, and educational activities based on, the special features being conserved. Education and interpretation are not ‘cherries on the cake’ but an integral part of the ingredients of what protected area management should be about.

Costs and benefits – that the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, helping people explore, enjoy and understand the North Pennines, supporting land-based industries all costs money and appropriate resources need to be found for it. The world does not owe conservation organisations a living, but good ideas, backed up by sound evidence and implemented through strong partnerships, should be supported with funds and the time to create benefits for people and nature.
The North Pennines AONB is increasingly nationally recognised as being an exemplar of what Protected Landscapes can do for conservation, local communities and the local economy. There is wide recognition of the ecosystem services provided by this high quality landscape, in relation to issues such as employment, climate change mitigation, health and wellbeing, clean air and clean water. Local people understand and support the aims of the designation and are increasingly involved in work towards those aims.

Local communities are stable and prosperous, with a wide range of services and facilities. The majority of our moorland grits have been blocked and our internationally important peatlands are functioning wetland ecosystems; as a result, areas of peat are actively building again, and providing services such as carbon storage, flood risk management and watercolour reduction.

There is a greater area of, and improved condition of, species-rich grasslands, including our nationally important hay meadows, than there was in 2010. Many small species-rich fields, which would have been lost without a tightening of regulations governing their ploughing and re-seeding, have survived and are thriving.

Populations of characteristic birds of the North Pennines, including waders and black grouse, are still nationally important, stable and sustainable; hen harrier, peregrine and merlin numbers reflect the area’s designation as an internationally important place for these species. Other raptor species such as short-eared owl, red kite and buzzard also have sustainable populations within the AONB.

Ninety-nine percent of Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition, compared to 80.4% in 2008, and that this is sustainable into the future; there is consensus amongst conservation agencies and land managers as to what this represents.

Remote areas of moorland remain free from tracks and roads and the wildness of parts of the area is still protected and prized. Dark skies are still valued and protected and the levels of tranquillity are at least as high as when they were mapped in 2007.

Our woods are more sustainably managed and richer in wildlife than today. They produce timber and wood products that provide woods with a sustainable economic future, promoting their continued management.

The tourism industry is both environmentally and economically sustainable and is supported by local communities. Tourism is based on, and actively supports, the special qualities of the North Pennines AONB and European Geopark:

• Visitors perceive the North Pennines as a high quality, green destination where they can experience, understand and contribute to the natural and cultural heritage of the AONB
• Local communities welcome visitors, are proud to communicate what’s special about their area, and benefit economically from appropriate levels of tourism
• Organisations working in tourism in (and around) the AONB recognise the North Pennines as a destination and work together to develop and promote a sustainable industry.
Our historic environment is better recorded and understood, and local people, many of whom regularly participate in research and interpretive projects, appreciate and value their community roots within the context of a 10,000-year archaeological heritage.

The area’s geological and mining heritage is globally renowned. Efforts to conserve and celebrate it have made the North Pennines a leading light in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network.

Small-scale new residential developments have appeared in appropriate settlements, supporting schools and local services; these developments are in local stone and work with the grain of their setting, adding to its character and distinctiveness.

Small-scale and non-visually intrusive renewable energy has been embraced fully. New developments use the principles of sustainable design and construction, local people and visitors have reduced their own energy consumption, carefully sited domestic turbines have brought wind energy to remote properties, whilst solar power, biomass, micro-hydro and ground source heat technologies are widely applied. There is no commercial wind energy development in the AONB or impacting upon its quality of wildness, tranquillity and remoteness.

Local people and visitors can visit and move around the area on a public transport system which integrates services across political boundaries. Services link with railways in places such as Penrith, Hexham, Langwathby and a thriving Weardale Railway, which itself links the North Pennines to Bishop Auckland and the mainline beyond.

The children of farming families, and others, want to farm in the uplands and it is a rewarding way of life which helps to sustain the special character of the area. Farm diversification has continued and targeted agri-environment schemes and other grant support, along with a sound market for locally produced beef and lamb, has grown farm incomes and sustainable land management.

The cultural associations with the North Pennines are widely known and celebrated, but not simply the links with Auden, Turner and Dickens, but also through the work of the artists and crafts people that create a living culture today.

Many structures and buildings associated with the traditional miner-farmer landscape are sustainably conserved and in regular domestic, agricultural, industrial or community use; including historic chapels, farmsteads, barns and dry stone walls. More people are learning and employing the skills needed to conserve these important features of the landscape.

Landscapes and biodiversity are adapting naturally to climate change. There will be losses and gains, but there is long term planning to deal with the impacts of a changing environment.

Grouse moor management still contributes significantly to employment and conservation and this is widely recognised. There are closer partnerships between conservation bodies and land managers. The Heather and Grass Burning Code is being successfully implemented.

The North Pennines is a much used outdoor classroom and local organisations work more closely together to support the teaching of the curriculum and lifelong learning through programmes and projects which inspire people of all ages.

The nature, history and culture of the area are extensively and expertly interpreted, yet the landscape is not cluttered by the paraphernalia of interpretation. High quality audio, digital media and web-based interpretation reaches new audiences (though many people still want, and can get, high quality printed material); this adds to the programmes of face to face interpretation and excellent events which bring the area to life.

By common perception and the indicators of the day, the quality of life in the North Pennines is high.
A series of themes are presented on the following pages, reflecting the subjects directly associated with the management of Protected Landscapes. These themes are:

- Landscape and geodiversity
- Land management and biodiversity
- Historic environment
- Enjoying and understanding the North Pennines
- Economy and business
- Community and culture
- Increasing knowledge about the AONB

For each theme there is a series of

- Issues (the pressures or opportunities we need to resolve or recognise)
- Objectives (what we want to achieve in relation to the issues that have been identified).

The objectives are as measurable as possible, but are best seen in conjunction with the actions which are put forward to meet them. The actions are presented in the third part of this Plan, the Action Plan – you can find out more about this on page 38 of this strategy document.

The issues and objectives are not an exhaustive list of everything affecting the North Pennines – they are presented as the things most directly linked to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and helping people to enjoy, appreciate and explore the area.
Issues

1. **European Landscape Convention (ELC)** – The UK signed up to the ELC in 2007. This will lead to a sharper focus on landscape conservation and more robust approaches and evidence will be needed to support this. A better understanding of the fine grain of the landscape will bring about improvements in its conservation.

2. **New buildings and conversions** – The strong vernacular character of older villages and buildings has been weakened in places by more recent development some of which has not respected local settlement pattern, scale, vernacular tradition or materials. Farms and agricultural buildings are increasingly being converted to residential use as agricultural employment declines, and piecemeal insensitive conversions of buildings continues to erode a sense of place. Small-scale renewable energy projects are welcomed but need to be carefully managed. The conversion of former shops, public buildings and chapels etc. can also lead to a diminution of the richness of the streetscape, as features associated with the buildings' original use are lost.

3. **Rural roads** – The insensitive management of the roadside environment is having a strongly urbanising effect on rural character in many places. This can be seen in unsympathetic hard engineering and lighting schemes and the proliferation of highway and other signage.

4. **Light and noise pollution** – Freedom from light and noise pollution are key components of the area’s tranquillity, which CPRE has mapped as nationally important. Minimising light and noise pollution from development, recreation, military use and civil aviation should remain a priority.

5. **Moorland roads/tracks** – The recent increase in the number of moorland tracks is creating intrusive features in the landscape and impacting on peatland conservation. Some areas which have never had such roads are increasingly under threat from this kind of development, which is eroding the area’s quality of wildness and remoteness.

6. **Pressure for commercial scale wind energy** – National and Regional planning policy severely restricts the potential for commercial scale wind energy development in AONBs (PPS22) but pressure for the development of wind farms on the edge of the AONB remains strong. In some cases development in the setting of the AONB can be just as damaging to the character of the area as would be development within the boundary, eroding the sense of wildness and remoteness of the AONB and creating a demarcation in landscape character where none was previously perceived.
Landscape and geodiversity

7. **Masts** – There is pressure for communications masts which can be prominent and intrusive features on elevated ridges. The challenge will be to balance operational issues with sensitive siting.

8. **Trees** – The stock of field and boundary trees is slowly declining. There is a very low level of recruitment of younger trees, particularly in walled landscapes.

9. **Walls** – Dry stone walls are well maintained in places but neglected and becoming derelict in others – particularly the moorland fringes and dale heads.

10. **Conserving geodiversity** – Sites and features of geological interest are under occasional threat from development and inappropriate land management, but there are opportunities for geoconservation too, often associated with extant quarrying permissions and restoration schemes. The mineral wealth of the North Pennines continues to be under threat from unregulated and often illegal collection.

11. **Changes in agriculture** – Over the last 50 years or so, changes in agriculture have led to the decline of traditional landscape features such as dry stone walls and field barns and the ‘improvement’ of hay meadows and pastures. In the last 20 years there has been a growth in the number of very small farms and large farms, with medium scale enterprises declining. The landscape impact of changes in agricultural policy needs to be monitored and addressed.

12. **Managing tourism growth** – The growth of tourism brings pressure for new facilities like caravan sites and increased traffic on local roads and in the dales/valley villages. Such growth needs careful management.

13. **Woods in the landscape** – Many semi-natural woodlands have little active management and are often continuously grazed-through by livestock, which inhibits natural regeneration. Woodlands are scarce in the AONB and the planting of new native woodland is important to restore this habitat within the landscape.

14. **Commercial forestry** – The development of commercial forestry in the C20th introduced large-scale plantations into formerly open moorland landscapes. Plantations are dominated by Sitka spruce and are often poorly integrated visually into the wider landscape.

15. **Mineral extraction** – Mineral extraction has had a substantial impact on the landscape and has left a legacy of dereliction in places. Active mineral workings often occupy prominent sites and can be visually intrusive. The lorry traffic they generate can have a strong presence on narrow rural roads.

16. **Conserving mining heritage** – Relics of the lead and other mineral mining industries are an important part of the character and cultural heritage of the North Pennines. Many relic features, particularly abandoned buildings and structures, are in physical decline.
17. **Climate change** – Though not yet fully understood, the future impacts of climate change are likely to mean a change in the nature of the vegetation occurring in the North Pennines and in the crops (of food and timber) that can be grown here. There is also likely to be a change in the distribution of species and habitats. Understanding, mitigating and adapting to these changes are the major challenges facing the conservation of landscape quality and character in the uplands.

18. **Boundary issues** – During the life of this plan Natural England may consult on proposals to review the boundaries of AONBs. This will provide an opportunity to address any anomalies and to consider the need for the inclusion of further areas of land which satisfy the criteria of outstanding natural beauty.

**Objectives**

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<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>LG1</td>
<td>To ensure that new development within the AONB or its setting does not have a significant adverse impact on the purpose of AONB designation.</td>
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<td>LG2</td>
<td>To ensure that road improvement/safety schemes are compatible with rural character.</td>
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<td>LG3</td>
<td>To enhance landscape quality and character on farmland.</td>
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<td>LG4</td>
<td>To ensure that important geological sites and features are recorded, conserved and not lost to development.</td>
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<td>LG5</td>
<td>To end the illegal and unregulated collection of minerals and mining artefacts.</td>
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<td>LG6</td>
<td>To improve the appearance of active and disused quarries, and manage or restore them in a way that complements and enhances the character of the local landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity.</td>
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<td>LG7</td>
<td>To ensure that trees and woodland (new and existing) contribute more positively to natural beauty and climate change mitigation and adaptation.</td>
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<td>LG8</td>
<td>To understand and plan for the likely landscape impacts of climate change.</td>
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<td>To accommodate small-scale renewable energy technology without a significant adverse impact on the purpose of designation.</td>
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<td>To use national AONB boundary reviews to address anomalies in the AONB boundary.</td>
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Land management and biodiversity

Issues

1. **Burning** – Sound grouse moor management contributes significantly to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, and well-managed burning has been important in this. However, the burning of dwarf shrub communities in less than ideal conditions can result in damage to carbon-rich soils and sensitive vegetation communities. Moorland managers should follow best practice guidance and use the moorland management plan template developed between Natural England and the Moorland Association to ensure sustainable burning programmes are implemented.

2. **Land drainage** – Artificial drainage systems occur across the AONB, from grips on the blanket bog and heather moorland to field drains in meadows and pastures. Peat and soil erosion caused by moorland grips result in the degradation of blanket peat, loss of stored carbon and water colouration. Rapid rainwater run-off from all systems of artificial drainage increases the likelihood of downstream flooding. The introduction of new drainage systems to pastures and allotments negatively affects species such as water vole, invertebrates and breeding waders. Insensitive management operations on existing draining systems, including small, natural watercourses, can also damage water vole habitat.

3. **Designation** – Large tracts of the AONB are covered by SSSI, SPA, SAC and Man & Biosphere designations. Steps need to be taken to improve the condition of nationally designated sites and to ensure that any plans or projects do not have a significant adverse impact on the important features of SACs/SPAs. The National Indicator – Improved Local Biodiversity (NI197) should lead to an improvement in management of local sites.
However, notable areas of land of significant biodiversity and nature conservation importance are currently not designated and are therefore not protected by or managed through this mechanism. There is also the potential to establish a ‘new style’ UNESCO Biosphere Reserve for the AONB and more work is needed to assess what added value or disadvantages it might bring.

4. Woodland biodiversity – Woodlands are scarce in the AONB and the planting of new native woodland is important to restore this habitat within the landscape. The biodiversity and landscape value of many woodlands within the AONB could be enhanced through changes in management.

5. Agriculture – The majority of farms in the AONB are only marginally financially viable and there is a constant pressure to increase farm incomes. In many cases this has resulted in a gradual intensification of farming in the form of the amount of fertiliser used, the number and type of livestock kept, earlier hay/silage cutting dates, reseeding, drainage and the loss of small-scale unfarmed habitats. With steady farm intensification there tends to be an associated decline in farm biodiversity. Some parts of the AONB will become Nitrate Vulnerable Zones during 2010, reducing the scope for intensification in these areas.

6. Environmental Stewardship – There is a critical need to ensure that Environmental Stewardship Schemes deliver landscape-scale benefits for the conservation of natural beauty in all its forms. A strategic approach to the use of Environmental Stewardship is required to maximise its value in delivering environmental outcomes, whilst supporting farm incomes at the same time.

7. Specific action for BAP species and habitats – The AONB supports species and habitats of local, national and international importance; the conservation of some of these requires special intervention.

8. Moorland roads and tracks – The creation of engineered tracks across heather moorland and blanket bog often results in direct habitat loss and damage to the hydrological integrity of these habitats. Though more science is needed, it is considered that they can exacerbate rainwater run-off, increase sediment loads to neighbouring rivers, facilitate motorised access to otherwise remote areas and are visually intrusive in the landscape.

9. Invasive species – There is anecdotal evidence that the populations of a number of non-native species are steadily increasing in the AONB, for example grey squirrel, American mink and Himalayan balsam. Many non-native species pose a threat to native species and habitats through the introduction and/or carriage of disease, competition for food and/or space, or direct predation.

10. Persecution of birds of prey – The populations of several species of bird of prey are artificially low, or unable to establish at all; the significant factor in this is likely to be illegal persecution.

11. Climate change – Climate change is predicted to have a major impact on species and habitats within the AONB over the coming decades. The ‘climate space’ for some species is likely to disappear altogether and as a result these species will gradually disappear from the North Pennines. Equally as conditions change, other species may be able to colonise the area. Maintaining and enhancing networks of natural habitats and establishing areas of wild land could show us how our uplands would naturally respond to climate change and be a useful tool to influence climate change adaptation planning.
Land management and biodiversity

Objectives

LB1 To ensure that burning management of heather and grasslands is sympathetic to all aspects of biodiversity conservation.

LB2 To ensure that land drainage of meadows and moorlands does not reduce the quality of the habitats and species and other special characteristics of the AONB, and take action to restore habitats affected by drainage.

LB3 To secure, by 2014, appropriate conservation designations and/or land management schemes for remaining undesignated or ‘non-scheme’ hay meadows, other species-rich grasslands, springs and flushes, and also those moorland fringe pastures and allotments which support important numbers of breeding wading birds.

LB4 To improve the conservation value of the AONB’s Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites.

LB5 To improve and enhance farms and other land, including at a landscape scale where possible.

LB6 To support the conservation of hay meadows, peatlands, waders, black grouse and calaminarian grasslands through the expansion of current initiatives for their conservation and the establishment of new initiatives for these and other UK BAP habitats and species throughout the life of this Plan.

LB7 To ensure that no new moorland tracks are built without appropriate permission and that any new tracks have no significant adverse impact on hydrology, natural beauty, tranquillity and the interest features of NATURA 2000 sites.

LB8 To reduce and manage the number/range of invasive and non-native species in the AONB, where these impact on other conservation interests.

LB9 To end the illegal persecution of birds of prey.

LB10 To understand and plan for the potential impacts of climate change on BAP habitats and species.

LB11 To implement a large scale ecological restoration project that seeks to have natural processes as the primary land management objective.
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Black grouse, Brian Irving © Helm Images

Juniper woods in Upper Teesdale © Natural England/Charlie Hedley
The historic environment

Issues

1. **Raising awareness** – The historic environment would benefit from more being known about it and more people being aware of its importance.

2. **Historic landscape conservation** – Piecemeal consideration of the historic environment as a series of isolated sites and features divorces these from their context and dilutes integration with other aspects of land and heritage management. There is a need to ensure that landscape-scale conservation of the historic environment is prioritised alongside that for biodiversity and landscape character.

3. **Historic building conservation** – The AONB contains a wealth of fascinating and often very attractive buildings, ranging in condition from well-maintained and occupied structures to fragmentary ruins. The conservation of these is essential to the maintenance of local distinctiveness throughout different areas of the AONB. Many, though not all, of these buildings are in Conservation Areas and the completion of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans is essential.

4. **Community participation** – It is important to engage and involve local communities directly with the management and celebration of their heritage; this is valuable for its own sake and also because greater involvement leads to greater care for the historic environment, brings new aspects of our history to light, and should lead to stronger support for conservation.
5. **Resourcing** – The AONB’s historic environment has been relatively under-funded for a long time. Staff and funds need to be in place to support the co-ordination and implementation of historic environment objectives.

6. **Climate change** – Climate change is likely to present a number of challenges to the management of the AONB’s historic environment through the lifetime of this Plan and beyond. Warmer, drier summers could result in a greater risk of moorland and forest fires, while long-established agricultural regimes may be forced to change. If there is an increase in flooding events there could be more erosion of sites by rivers. There is also likely to be a growing demand for renewable energy sources (e.g. wind turbines and solar panels) that will impact on historic buildings and the wider historic environment.

**Objectives**

- **HE1** To enhance the county Historic Environment Records, and thus enable more informed landscape management.
- **HE2** To conserve, through specific projects, relict landscapes and landscape features.
- **HE3** To contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB’s historic environment through the sensitive maintenance of historic structures.
- **HE4** To improve the management of Conservation Areas.
- **HE5** To increase community participation in historic environment research, conservation and interpretation.
- **HE6** To secure resources to support the conservation and enhancement of the North Pennines’ historic environment throughout the life of the Plan.
- **HE7** To understand and act on the likely impacts of climate change on the historic environment and produce an adaptation plan to address them.

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Killhope, the North of England Lead Mining Museum © Shane Harris

A volunteer surveying archaeological features in Upper Weardale © Dr Tom Gledhill

Outton Lime Kiln, West Allen Valley © Peter Rogers
Enjoying and understanding the North Pennines

Issues

1. **Communicating effectively about the AONB, its special qualities and how to look after them** – The tourism offer in the North Pennines is based on the area’s natural assets or special qualities, assets which also lie at the heart of quality of life for local people. There needs to be effective information about the special features of the area and the opportunities for outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, riding, canoeing and bird watching. People wanting to enjoy these activities need to have the highest quality information and interpretation to enable them to make the most of what the North Pennines has to offer and to help them support conservation as part of their visit. In this work there is an important role for everyone – the Area Tourism Partnerships, individual businesses, attractions, local communities and conservation bodies.

2. **Interpretive structures** – There are many different organisations involved in producing panels, interpretive artworks etc, and many examples of this kind of work of varying designs and quality. There needs to be a uniformly high standard of content, design, production and maintenance, to reinforce the fact that one is in a protected landscape and to cut down on visual clutter.

3. **Making the most of our geodiversity** – The North Pennines is already one of the most active and successful of the UNESCO European Geoparks. There is a need for continued significant activity on geotourism, education and interpretation co-ordinated by the AONB Partnership, and the continued input of partners such as Killhope Museum, North Pennines Heritage Trust and the British Geological Survey. The North Pennines will undergo reassessment for its UNESCO European Geopark status in 2009 and 2013.
4. **Increasing education opportunities in the AONB** – There is immense scope for the North Pennines to be an outdoor classroom where the national curriculum can be delivered in exciting and engaging ways. There is a need for more support for teachers (programmes and training), more support for school travel costs, more joined up infrastructure of places to learn so as to make the journey here more worthwhile, and greater co-ordination of effort to bring this about.

5. **New media and new audiences** – It is desirable that publicly funded interpretation and education provision reaches as wide an audience as possible; new media (audio, film, animation, performance art, downloadable and web-based material etc) can reach wider audiences and avoid cluttering the countryside with signs (though there is still an important role for printed interpretation in leaflet and panel form).

6. **Public Rights of Way and Access Land** – There is a network of 2000 miles of Public Rights of Way and large areas of Access Land in the AONB which form an important resource for the further development of the area’s recreational and tourism potential. Ensuring that the rights of way network and access land are usable and promoted will help to ensure that this potential can be realised. Rights of way should also be easy to use by all legal users and, wherever reasonable, access should be available to people with a wide range of mobility difficulties. Local authorities should recognise the positive role which Public Rights of Way play in the rural economy and ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to help maintain and develop it.

7. **Mechanically Propelled Vehicles (MPVs)** – Byways Open to All Traffic and un-surfaced unclassified county roads provide a recreational resource for four wheel drive vehicles and motorcycles. Some routes can sustain motorised use while others can be damaged by frequent or inappropriate activity. In the parts of the AONB which have conservation designations there is a perception, and some evidence, that motor vehicles can impact negatively on the designated features and reduce the tranquillity of the AONB.
Objectives

EU1 Ensure that the area’s special qualities are effectively communicated to visitors and local people and that visitors:
- have information on outdoor recreation activities such as walking, riding and cycling
- have information on how their visit can contribute to conservation and have minimal environmental footprint
- know when they are in the AONB and European Geopark

EU2 To encourage visitors to contribute positively to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

EU3 To ensure interpretive structures are of a high quality, are well maintained and reflect the character of the AONB.

EU4 To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the area’s geodiversity and retain the AONB’s UNESCO European and Global Geopark status.

EU5 To encourage more schools to use the North Pennines as an outdoor classroom.

EU6 To encourage new and more diverse audiences to understand the special qualities of the area.

EU7 To ensure that the Public Rights of Way network is appropriately managed, having regard to the importance of the North Pennines as a popular recreational and visitor destination.

EU8 To ensure that the three Local Access Forums are facilitated to play a collaborative role in decisions relating to access to the North Pennines countryside.

EU9 To ensure that the legal use of Public Rights of Way by mechanically propelled vehicles is appropriately managed to avoid significant adverse impact on a route’s surface and on the tranquillity of the AONB.
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1. **A common and shared approach to the development and management of sustainable tourism in the AONB** – A common strategic approach is needed in order to improve the sustainable development and management of tourism which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors. The process of securing the EUROPARC Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas could generate a shared approach and the production of a widely agreed sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for the area.

2. **A shared approach to the pre-arrival marketing and promotion of the (in particular nature and culture-based) opportunities for visitors to the North Pennines** – For the economic sustainability of the tourism industry in the North Pennines it is of critical importance that pre-arrival marketing successfully delivers visitors (especially high value ones) to tourism businesses. Organisations responsible for carrying out pre-arrival marketing need to send out more accurate, appropriate and positive messages about the tourism offer in the AONB, and this will need cross-boundary collaboration.

3. **Communicating effectively to visitors about the AONB and its special qualities and how to look after them** – The tourism offer in the North Pennines is based on the area’s natural assets or special qualities. Visitors need effective information about the special features of the area, how they can experience them and how they can support their conservation.
4. **Integrated Transport for visitors and local people** – The vast majority of visitors to the North Pennines arrive by private car. However, there is scope to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking (‘sustainable transport options’) as alternative means of getting around and enjoying the special qualities of the AONB. The cross boundary nature of the area (three counties and two English Regions) makes the provision of public transport which ‘makes sense’ for local communities and visitors to the North Pennines a particular challenge.

5. **Appropriate tourism development** – Appropriate forms of tourism in the North Pennines are those based on the area’s special qualities and include: outdoor recreation (such as walking, cycling, horse riding, fishing, climbing, canoeing), geotourism, wildlife and heritage tourism, and cultural tourism. To enable people to make the most of what the North Pennines has to offer, gaps in and improvements to infrastructure need to be addressed, e.g. in relation to accommodation and public transport.

6. **Working with tourism businesses** – In order to follow a sustainable approach to the development and management of tourism in the AONB, close working relationships need to be fostered, encouraged and maintained between tourism businesses, the AONB Partnership and tourism support organisations. It is critical that the AONB Partnership and others work with the industry to help to ‘green’ their operations (there were, for instance, 34 Green Tourism Business Scheme members at the end of 2008). If we are to promote the North Pennines as a ‘green destination’ where visitors can ‘get away from it all’ and experience fantastic, high quality landscapes, wildlife and culture then we will need an environmentally responsible industry to back up the claim.

7. **Profitability of farming and forestry** – Upland farming in the North Pennines is economically marginal and depends very heavily on environmental and other payments. Profitability of forestry is very dependent on world market prices and the cost of transport, although with new interest in woodfuel heating more local markets for wood products may develop. Current policy trends suggest downward pressure of public funding support for both environmental and other farming payments, putting further pressures on profitability of farms in the AONB. Most farm household diversification has been through family members seeking work off the farm, but opportunities exist to create more farm income by additional economic activities on-farm.

8. **Grouse moor management** – Shooting supports jobs in land and estate management and contributes to the local economy, both through direct employment and through attracting high-value visitors, partly at a time when visitor numbers are reducing at the end of the season. Its importance in this regard merits wider recognition and support to retain the skills involved.

9. **Succession and skills transfer** – Few farmers in the North Pennines have children wishing to take over the farm, and where they do the farm tends not to bring in enough income to be able to support two working families. There is a risk that important skills necessary for managing farms for conservation and other public benefit will be lost when an older generation of farmers retires.
10. **Remoteness, low population and communication** – Businesses operating in the North Pennines have to overcome a range of communication issues closely associated with their relatively remote location. Access to training is more limited than in less sparsely populated areas, making skills acquisition and subsequent training sometimes more costly and time consuming. ICT links can still be limited, with some areas of Weardale and Teesdale having no access to broadband services or mobile phone coverage, but the provision of the infrastructure to support these services needs very sensitive siting.

11. **Supporting creative and other knowledge industries** – Sparsely populated rural areas with high quality landscape, like the North Pennines, often attract creative people who take inspiration from their environment. This includes artists and craftspeople, as well as those who can work remotely through good ICT links. These businesses can contribute both to the visitor offer of the AONB and to the employment and training options open to other residents.

12. **Local products, local distinctiveness** – Locally produced food and other products can help to reinforce local distinctiveness, add value to the local economy and can reduce food miles. Bringing forward measures to support local product development will be important during the life of the Management Plan.
Objectives

EB1 To secure the EUROPARC Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas during the lifetime of the plan.

EB2 To market and promote the North Pennines, its special qualities and its potential as a green tourism destination.

EB3 To increase opportunities for visitors and local people to maximise their use of sustainable transport.

EB4 To establish new (and support existing) high quality tourism development, infrastructure, products, services, signage, and marketing in (and about) the AONB which reflects the area’s high quality environment and landscape and is in keeping with its setting and/or the area’s special qualities.

EB5 To encourage an annual increase in the membership of validated green accreditation and quality tourism schemes in the North Pennines and a greater level of working together between green tourism businesses.

EB6 To support the development of new and existing ambassadors for the North Pennines who also use the area’s special qualities in their marketing literature, websites and offers.

EB7 To support the development of packages which link visitors with natural beauty, local businesses and local products.

EB8 To support and develop skills training in farming, woodland and game management, nature and heritage conservation in the AONB.

EB9 To secure broadband coverage for the whole of the AONB without having a significant adverse impact on natural beauty.

EB10 To support arts and crafts businesses to inspire others, contribute to community life and tourism.

EB11 To support and encourage development, production and use of local food and other products, especially those linked to natural beauty.

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EB10         | EU1, CC7                 |
EB11         | EU1-2, CC4               |
Community and culture

Issues

1. **Sustainable facilities and services** – Without facilities and infrastructure, local communities will wither, and natural beauty and local distinctiveness will suffer as a result. Though the AONB designation and this management plan cannot legitimately address all forms of local service and facility, there needs to be support through advice, advocacy and grant aid for the development of local transport, training, product marketing, visitor accommodation, and well designed facilities such as public toilets and village halls which use local materials and renewable energy. Local development policy should support the retention of essential rural services.

2. **Community and conservation** – There is tremendous scope for local people to take an active role in conserving the character of the AONB and there are many local groups across the North Pennines which come together as communities of place or interest. Where these are connected to the purpose of AONB designation every effort should be made to listen to and assist these organisations in meeting their aspirations and to provide opportunities for initiatives such as local heritage research, the development of Parish Plans, community archaeology and conservation volunteering. There is also great potential to promote use of the AONB as a resource for encouraging healthy lifestyles.

3. **Community interpretation** – Local people should have an increasing role in identifying what is special and distinctive about where they live and they should be supported to celebrate it. This might include events, interpretive publications and initiatives such as oral history projects and Parish Maps.

4. **Involving local communities in tourism** – For tourism in the North Pennines to be truly sustainable it is critical to ensure that it supports (and enhances where possible), rather than reduces, the quality of life for local communities living in the AONB. To do this we need to: involve local communities in the planning process; make sure there are good lines of communication between the AONB Partnership, local people and visitors; and identify and seek to mitigate any conflicts that may arise.

5. **Lifelong learning** – There is a proud tradition of lifelong learning in the North Pennines stretching back to the heyday of lead mining. Recent activities, like geologically focused evening classes and the annual evening course on the nature of Teesdale, have shown the continued appetite for this kind of learning and more can be done to satisfy this need.
6. **Recognising and celebrating the area’s artistic and literary heritage** – Although some artists with a national and international reputation who were inspired by the North Pennines are well recognised, there may be others who are not as obvious. Recognising and celebrating their different contributions to the cultural life of the area can throw a new light on life in the North Pennines and can help others understand what makes this place special.

7. **Recognising, celebrating and supporting ‘living’ cultural heritage** – Culture doesn’t just mean things dead people did; the living culture of the North Pennines contributes much to the sense of place, whether that is the ‘chapel’ culture of the non-conformist church groups or the Tar Bar’ls at Allendale or the way local artists and crafts people draw inspiration from the landscape in their work. Local culture and traditions give people a way to give expression to their emotions about the place they live and work in, but they can also help other people understand the value of the North Pennines. There is a need to record and celebrate the strong cultural links of people to the land and land management and mining. Some of this cultural experience is being lost as memories of old farming practices and mining die away.

8. **Natural beauty and diverse communities** – To take advantage of the economic opportunities presented by the conservation and celebration of natural and cultural heritage, communities need a mix of skills and ages. Currently people in the age group 16-34 are under-represented and we have a higher percentage of older people than in England as a whole.

### Objectives

**CC1** To support the retention and expansion of village services.

**CC2** To support and encourage community groups to actively engage in conserving and celebrating the AONB.

**CC3** To encourage and support local communities to help interpret the special qualities of the area.

**CC4** To encourage greater community participation and better understanding of the benefits of a sustainable tourism industry.

**CC5** To establish annual programmes of lifelong learning that are based on the area’s special qualities.

**CC6** Support and develop programmes linked to local and national cultural figures that have celebrated and been inspired by the North Pennines.

**CC7** To ensure that local communities, networks and individuals can give expression to what their landscape and their ‘place’ means to them.

**CC8** To develop new opportunities for young people to find training or employment in the area related to the purpose of AONB designation.

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<td>CC1</td>
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<td>CC2</td>
<td>LG1, LB6, HES, EU1, EU4, CC3-8</td>
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<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<td>CC8</td>
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Increasing knowledge of the AONB

Issues

1. **Limited baseline data** – There is currently insufficient data collection and analysis available to inform Management Plan monitoring. Some areas of research are already acknowledged and work is underway, but there is a need to establish jointly agreed research priorities for the AONB and to act on them and share the findings. Areas for research include the value of ecosystem services, issues surrounding peatland management, tourism research and gaining a better understanding of the historic environment.

2. **Climate change** – Research will be necessary to understand the likely impacts of climate change on the natural beauty of the North Pennines.

3. **Landscape characterisation and guidance** – Driven by the European Landscape Convention, there is a need to refine the character types presented in this plan and produce detailed character area descriptions and guidance on how this character can be reinforced in development and land management activities.

4. **Biodiversity and geodiversity** – Research into aspects of the area’s biodiversity is regularly providing new insights into conservation management, but more is required to inform future activity. There is a need for more mapping and research focusing on the Quaternary geology of the AONB, and further detailed work on the dating of mineralisation.

5. **Peat and ecosystem services** – There is an instinctive view that peatland conservation improves the management of flood risk, but more research is needed to confirm the benefits. Peat is an acknowledged store of carbon but more research is needed into how much carbon it stores. There is an ongoing need to understand what really constitutes best practice in moorland management including burning practice, and share that with those involved.

6. **Historic environment** – There is a pressing need for improved data relating to the historic environment in order to improve our understanding of the resource and inform its effective management. In the past, research has tended to concentrate to a large extent on post-medieval industrial archaeology, and especially on lead mining; this remains a priority area, but must be studied within the context of an archaeological heritage stretching back some 10,000 years.
7. **Tourism activity** – There is a critical need to improve collective understanding of the current (baseline) level of tourism activity in the North Pennines. Without this knowledge (Where? Who? How much? What?) it will become increasingly difficult to know what intervention is required (and by whom) and whether any activity is having a positive (and sustainable) impact.

8. **Life-changing outdoor education** – It is accepted that being in the natural world is conducive to learning and adds much to our wellbeing, but research needs to be undertaken to establish what kinds of wider benefits children get from coming out into the North Pennines for learning experiences and which experiences have the most impact.

### Objectives

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Achieving these objectives

The issues identified in this part of the plan have given rise to the 61 objectives presented here. To fulfil these objectives a series of actions are presented, and these can be found in the Action Plan document which forms the third part of the AONB Management Plan.

The Action Plan presents the initial actions proposed for the plan, but it will be reviewed annually. This annual review will reflect progress towards achievement of the objectives and allow for the insertion of new actions which might implement the objectives more fully, or add weight to what has already been achieved.

The Action Plan shows

- The objective to be addressed
- The initial lead organisation that will begin to make things happen
- The partners who will be involved
- The timescale for implementation
- The role of the AONB Partnership Staff Unit

After spring 2010, the most up-to-date version of the Action Plan will be available on the North Pennines AONB Partnership website www.northpennines.org.uk

The North Pennines AONB Partnership Staff Unit would like to thank all those people and organisations who contributed to the production of this plan. This includes all those who contributed to the consultation on the Scoping Report for the plan in late 2007, the members of the AONB Partnership’s five Working Groups and members of the Technical Advisory Panel established to support Plan production.

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